



AGENDA REPORT

DATE: January 26, 2010
TO: City Council
FROM: Dave Brees, Special Projects Manager
**SUBJECT: FIRST STREET STREETSCAPE PROJECT FINAL DESIGN
(INCLUDING DOWNTOWN INTERSECTIONS)**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the First Street Streetscape Project Final Design.

BACKGROUND

Staff has worked with David Gates & Associates and BKF Engineers to advance the First Street Streetscape Project through the design process. City Council approved the Streetscape Project schematic design on September 8, 2009. Since that time, the project team has worked to develop a recommended composite of materials and finishes for the streetscape Final Design (Attachment 1). The work involved included coordination with the upcoming utility undergrounding project design team.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Final Design includes materials and finishes for the Streetscape Project which blend a combination of existing materials (granite, wood benches, recycle containers, etc.) with new materials to create a refreshed look and feel. The materials were selected for both their architectural appeal as well as their ability to create a sense of welcoming space. It is important to the design team to create a sense of place in downtown; a place to be considered as a destination rather than simply a means to an end.

The proposed plan provides for wider sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, street trees, a median, and furnishings. The design elements are intended to create a positive economic vitality to the area as well as address issues of pedestrian/bicycle safety and traffic flow. The sidewalks located on First Street between Main and State Streets encourage outdoor seating-area restaurants.

All of the proposed improvements will occur within the City's existing Right-of-Way except for the open area in front of Chase Bank located at Main and Third Streets. The bank building is situated away from the front edge of their property line. This set back creates a large plaza area which will allow for expanding our sidewalk treatment to create a consistent look and feel. Chase Bank officials are supportive of the City's efforts and have granted permission for the proposed improvements.

The proposed Final Design contains the materials and finishes for the Streetscape Project. Some of the highlights included in the booklet are:

- Entry monuments to alert motorists they are entering a special area
- Decorative paving to denote crosswalks while masking the negative effects of tire marks
- Removal of sidewalk trench drains on Main Street to eliminate trip hazards and flooding as a result of existing poor drainage channels
- New benches at the intersections will have a dry-stacked rock lower portion with a granite cap for seating
- Sidewalk paving patterns combine score patterns, sand blasted finishes, accent pavers and decorative street name tiles
- A combination of new and existing trees will be located throughout the project area; specimen trees will be placed along First Street to anchor key locations
- Signage along First Street will alert motorists of the need to share the travel lanes with bicyclists
- Signal connectivity between Foothill Expressway and the intersections of First and Main Street as well as First Street and Edith Avenue will improve traffic circulation
- String light placement will mask existing power and communication lines to create a unique sense of location at five intersections on Main and State Streets
- Raised crosswalks across Main Street at First Street to slow vehicle traffic as it enters the downtown
- Locations have been identified for possible future installation of public art

The tentative construction schedule for the Streetscape improvements is as follows. The four intersections of Second and Third Streets at Main and State Streets in July – October 2011 followed by the First Street Streetscape in spring 2012. This schedule will allow for the First Street Underground Utility Project and the Main Street Sewer Main Replacement Project to be completed in 2010 and not be in conflict with the construction of the above-ground streetscape improvements. Staff has initiated conversations with both the Los Altos Village Association and the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce to keep the business community aware of the timing and pending improvements. Efforts have also been made to coordinate the streetscape improvements with the 100 First Street development project.

Upon Council approval, staff will proceed with the development of the construction documents and preparation of bid documents. Community Development staff have reviewed the environmental impacts of the project and are in the process of preparing a Negative Declaration. The construction design work for the intersections portion of the project will be completed by April 2010 and the First Street portion by July 2010. Staff will present a proposed construction schedule and project promotional plan when it returns to Council to award the Project's construction contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

Council approved the design for the First Street Streetscape Project as part of the FY2007-2008 budget process at a cost of \$607,950. The expenditure for the Project's Final Design and related construction documents has been funded via this previous Council action.

The First Street Streetscape Project is currently identified in the 2010 – 2011 Adopted CIP Plan in the amount of \$3,363,000 to fund the City's portion of the project. With the redevelopment of several of the parcels on First Street, it is anticipated each property would contribute to the streetscape improvements associated with its parcel. The combination of the identified City funds and funds estimated from the property developments should be sufficient to complete the streetscape project as proposed. Upon conclusion of the bidding process, staff will return to Council to award the construction contract. Should anticipated funding sources not be sufficient to complete the proposed project, alternative funding recommendations or value engineering of project elements will be identified and presented to Council for consideration.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may direct staff to consider alternative materials and finishes for the project.

Attachment(s): First Street Streetscape Project Materials & Finishes Selection Book